

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A process for fabricating a snack product comprising providing a dough sheet having a first layer and a second layer; cutting a dough piece having a continuous edge and a web scrap in the dough sheet using a cutting segment comprising a cup having a peripheral shape defined by a continuous shaped blade which crimps the first layer and the second layer together on the continuous edge of the dough piece; and

separating the dough piece from the web scrap by directing a pressurized gas through the cutting segment at the dough piece to discharge the dough piece from the cutting segment while ~~moving~~ pulling the web scrap at an angle relative to away from the dough piece in a selected direction with a force F, and then moving the dough pieces away from the web scrap.

2. (currently amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the shaped blade has a stepped cutting edge and the cutting step comprises pressing ~~a~~ the stepped cutting edge against the dough sheet.

3. (currently amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the dough piece is discharged onto a first conveyor moving on a horizontal plane and the web scrap is pulled by a second conveyor moving in the selected direction at an angle of between 5° to 75° from the horizontal plane.

~~2 wherein the dough comprises a first dough layer and a second dough layer, and the stepped cutting edge forms the dough piece with a sealed edge.~~

4. (currently amended) The process of claim ~~3~~ 1 further comprising cooking the dough piece following the separating step to form a ~~sealed~~ chamber in the dough piece sealed ~~bounded~~ by the ~~sealed~~ continuous edge.

5. (currently amended) The process of claim [4] 1 wherein during the separating step, ~~further comprises~~ moving the dough piece away from the web scrap comprises discharging the dough pieces onto a conveyor.

6. (currently amended) A process for fabricating a snack product comprising:
providing a dough sheet having a first layer and a second layer;
providing a cutter mechanism comprising a cutting segment having a continuous shaped cutting edge;
pressing the cutting edge against the dough sheet to form a web scrap and a dough piece retained by the cutter cutting segment and a web scrap having a continuous edge comprised of the first layer and the second layer crimped together;
directing a pressurized gas through the cutting segment at the dough piece to discharge the dough piece from the ~~cutter~~ cutting segment onto a first conveyor moving in a first direction; and
~~moving pulling~~ the web scrap ~~at an angle to~~ away from the dough piece during the directing step with a force F using a second conveyor moving in a second direction at an angle to the first direction.

7. (previously presented) The process of claim 6 wherein the cutter mechanism comprises a rotating cylindrical member comprising a ring having the cutting edge formed on an outside surface thereof.

8. (previously presented) The process of claim 6 wherein the shaped cutting edge includes a stepped surface.

9. (previously presented) The process of claim 6 wherein the cutter mechanism includes a gas conduit, and a gas port in the cutting segment in flow communication with the gas conduit, the gas conduit and the gas port configured to perform the directing step.

10. (currently amended) The process of claim 6 wherein the first direction is along a horizontal plane and the angle of the second direction is between from 5° to 75° from the horizontal plane.

~~further comprising moving the dough piece away from the cutter mechanism during the directing step.~~

11. (currently amended) The process of claim 6 further comprising following the directing step, performing a cleaning step by directing the pressurized gas into the ~~cutter~~ cutting segment.

12. (previously presented) The process of claim 6 further comprising following the directing step brushing the cutting segment.

13. (previously presented) The process of claim 6 wherein the cutter mechanism comprises a plurality of cutting segments having a plurality of common cutting edges.

14. (currently amended) A process for fabricating a snack product comprising:
providing a dough sheet having a first layer and a second layer;
cutting the dough sheet into a web scrap ~~having an opening~~ and a dough piece in the ~~web scrap opening~~ having a continuous crimped edge comprising the first layer and the second layer crimped together;

separating the dough piece from the web scrap by directing a pressurized gas at the dough piece while pulling on the web scrap with a force F and moving the web scrap away from the dough piece in a selected direction, and then moving the dough piece away from the web scrap; and
~~while moving the dough piece and moving the web scrap with a selected orientation relative to the dough piece; and~~

cooking the dough piece to expand a center portion of the dough piece into a sealed hollow chamber bounded by the continuous crimped edge and by portions of the first layer and the second layer.

15. (currently amended) The process of claim 14 wherein the cutting step is performed using a cutting segment having a stepped cutting edge and a port configured to direct the pressurized gas at the dough piece.

16. (currently amended) The process of claim 14 wherein moving the dough piece away moves the dough piece along a horizontal plane and the selected direction is at an angle of between 5° to 75° from the horizontal plane.

~~the dough piece includes a plurality of features proximate to the crimped edge.~~

17. (currently amended) The process of claim 14 wherein moving the dough piece away is performed with a first conveyor, and pulling on the web scrap is performed with a second conveyor.

~~the cooking step comprises frying.~~

18. (previously presented) The process of claim 14 wherein the crimped edge has a thickness less than that of the dough sheet.

19. (previously presented) The process of claim 14 wherein the cutting step is performed using a rotating cylindrical cutter mechanism having a plurality of cutting segments for forming the dough piece and the web scrap.

20. (previously presented) The process of claim 14 wherein the first layer and the second layer comprise potato flakes.

Claims 21-51 (canceled)